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# ANTI-CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

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# ANTI-CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

BY THE  
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AUTHOR OF 'COMMON OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY'  
'POPULAR ATTACKS UPON CHRISTIANITY' ETC.



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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	I
CLASS BITTERNESS . . . . .	7
A REPLY TO THE FOREGOING . . . . .	48

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# ANTI-CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

## INTRODUCTION

IN these democratic days, we are very interested in the widespread unrest of the masses, and a good deal is being written upon the subject just now. The following pages deal with but one aspect only of the subject—the prevalence of the atheistic element in Socialism.

I do not wish to express any opinion, in this book, either upon the merits or upon the demerits of the various economic, social, or political ideals of Socialism. I intend merely to speak of the prevalence of the atheistic element in Socialism. Further, I have no wish to imply that the ideals of Socialism tend necessarily towards atheism. I am merely concerned with the fact that very many Socialists are atheists, and that these maintain that Socialists, in order to be consistent, must be atheists and materialists.

For some eight years past, I have spent hours

every week in speaking, in arguing, and in answering questions in the London parks, and in other open spaces, which are the safety-valves of the masses in the metropolis. The public-meeting grounds serve the useful purpose of volcanoes, and relieve the excessive pressure of underground discontent. At these public meetings, where the very freest speech is allowed, the profound unrest of the masses comes to a head and expresses itself quite unrestrainedly. My experiences at the open-air meetings in the parks has added greatly to the interest which I have always felt in regard to the states of mind of working men and clerks of various types.

When speaking in the open-air, in the spots where disaffection concentrates its efforts and expresses itself fiercely, all day long on Sundays and also on week-nights, my one subject has been the Christian Religion. Therefore, at my meetings, it was upon the subject of Christianity that my audiences freely expressed their opinions. Consequently, of recent years, the knowledge which I have acquired of the mind of the masses is chiefly an acquaintance with the attitude of the park crowds towards theism in general and towards Christianity in particular. It is an attitude which is not sufficiently studied nor understood by the Church as a whole. The Church is apt to wonder

(1) why such a very small percentage of working men and clerks enter a place of worship, and (2) why, instead of doing so, hundreds of thousands of them habitually attend open-air meetings all day long on Sundays, and why so many listen to speeches all the evening on week-nights.

During the last eight or ten years, most of my time and thought has been devoted (*a*) to those who are actively and violently hostile to Christianity; and also (*b*) to those who, without being definitely hostile, deliberately remain wholly outside the ordinary ministrations of the Church. Perhaps the majority of those with whom I have come in contact in the parks—which are the strongholds of scepticism—are not average working men, nor typical clerks, nor normal small shopkeepers, &c. For the first eleven years of my ministerial life, however, my work was that of an ordinary parochial clergyman, and during that period I studied the masses of various large provincial towns from the point of view of a city clergyman. In spite of this somewhat varied experience, and in spite of my efforts to discover the facts from men, from books, and from newspapers, I still find it somewhat difficult to estimate aright the attitude of the average working man and average clerk towards Christianity. Opinions are sure to differ greatly with regard to the nature of the *average* man of

any and of every class : the problem is very difficult of solution, because the individuals which compose any and every class differ very much from each other.

One frequently hears the masses spoken of as if they consisted of a single type ; but this is no more the case with that particular section of the community which is denominated ' the masses,' than it is with any other section of society. All kinds of types are represented in every walk of life, and in both sexes.

The majority of working men are neither of the type which goes to Church, nor of the type which is articulate on the subject of religion at open-air meetings. Most working men are indifferent to the subject of religion. The majority are not really hostile to Christianity : they are not sufficiently interested in it to attack it. They are merely indifferent to Christianity. They are also very much in doubt as to what they ought to believe with regard to it. For instance, the latter are undecided as to whether God exists or not ; whether man could know anything about God, supposing that He does exist ; whether man has, or is, a spirit which is other than an attribute of his body ; and whether or not man survives the grave. This scepticism and indifference is displayed by them, not only in their attitude towards religion, but also

in their attitude towards other difficult and complex subjects. Scepticism and indifference are shown in the attitude of the masses even towards politics and to economics, and to every other large, complex, and difficult subject. The majority do not know what to think, and are disinclined to make much mental effort.

Indifference and scepticism are, however, diminishing. Working men are becoming better and better educated and are, therefore, increasingly interested in intellectual, in spiritual, in moral, in scientific, in political, and in economic problems. They are beginning to think seriously, and to read systematically. The publication and the very large sale of 'The People's Books' series, and other similar issues, is a notable sign of the times.

If there is one respect in which the vast majority of working men in large towns are agreed, it is with regard to the righteousness of class bitterness on their part. They are greatly biassed in favour of the masses, and against those classes which are in any degree well-to-do.

Mr. H. M. Hyndman says in 'Will Socialism benefit the English People?' :—

'We are accused of preaching the gospel of hate, and stirring up actual conflict. We do preach discontent, and we mean, if we can, to stir up actual conflict.'

In 'Class War' we read :—

'We preach the gospel of hatred because, in the circumstances, it seems the only righteous thing we can preach. To talk about the gospel of love is simply solemn rubbish.'

In 'The Child's Socialist Reader' is the following :—

'We should hate Capitalism and Landlordism with a deep and deadly hatred, and strive with all our might completely to change society into Socialism.'

The 'Red Catechism' informs children that :—

'The poor are poor because they are robbed.  
Who creates all wealth?—The working class.  
Who creates all poverty?—Our Capitalist society.'

In Marx's 'Capital' we are informed :—

'Capital is the vampire which will not loose its hold on the labourer so long as there is a muscle, a nerve, a drop of blood, to be exploited.'



## CLASS BITTERNESS

THE hostility to the well-to-dos, which is felt and expressed by a considerable section of the masses, is very apt to include hostility to *Christianity*. The class war is being carried on by those classes which, speaking generally, are not Christian, against those classes which are supposed, by the masses, to be Christian. A very large number of the 'workers' are against the employers, landlords, and 'capitalists'; and the 'workers' are apt to associate Christianity with the well-to-do and employing classes. This class warfare, which, as I have said, tends to include warfare against Christianity, is being skilfully embittered by the active campaign which is carried on, not only by sincere believers in the utility of such a campaign, but also by numerous unscrupulous, self-seeking agitators. Success in such agitations depends very much upon ministering to the prejudices and upon arousing the baser passions of the masses; and people who are very poor are apt to enjoy being told that their sufferings, their failures, and their humiliations are neither self-induced nor deserved, but that they are unjustly caused by those who exploit them: by

men who, owing to unfair and undeserved advantages, rather than to personal capacity or to painstaking industry, have been successful at the expense of those who, under present conditions, have been, and who, under the circumstances, could not help being unsuccessful.

Enthusiasm for social reform is undoubtedly a factor in this class war, which is apt to include a campaign against Christianity; but the personal vanity of professional agitators is another factor which enters very largely into it. These men know very well that the most certain method of collecting a large, an attentive, and an admiring crowd—or a large and enthusiastic circle of readers—is to be very violent in denunciation. It is obviously more effective, under the circumstances, to denounce both Christians and employers of labour, than it is to attack only the one or the other alone. The size of the crowd thus augmented, or the circle of readers thus acquired, and the intensity of the passions which are in this manner aroused, makes all the difference to the amount of the notoriety achieved by the speaker or writer. If 'Social Conditions' alone be attacked—in a park, or in the press—the crowd, or the circle of readers, is not nearly so large as when Christianity is also attacked at the same time. Similarly, if Christianity alone be attacked, not nearly so many people are

appealed to as when existing social conditions are also assaulted.

Further, if it be vehemently and eloquently maintained that most sweaters are canting Christians, the people who are smarting under real or supposed exploitation are very much more easily inflamed to violent passion than when the agitator merely asserts that business men make a profession of no higher ideal than the principle that 'business is business.'

The poor are constantly being informed by leaders in the class war against the owners of property, and against the possessors of brains and of skill, that Christianity—which, we are told, needs a great deal of money—is on the side of the well-to-do, because they finance religion. It is for ever being reiterated by agitators that the parson never forgets the financial side of his 'business,' and is, therefore, very naturally, on the side of privilege and of wealth; that he is, therefore, against the unfortunate, whom he relieves with petty doles in order to keep them quiet, because he does not want them to rise against the capitalist class, which finances the parson and his other worldly hobbies. The poor are for ever being told that the privileged classes support Christianity for interested motives, because religion is the 'opium' which is administered to the exploited in order

to keep them from rebellion. The poor are informed that the object of religion is to teach them 'not to covet nor desire other men's goods,' but to be content with poverty, because they will be rewarded hereafter for non-resistance to exploitation in this world.

The masses are informed that no Christian employer of labour, nor any manager of a business, however aggressive may be his religious professions on the Sunday, and however loudly he may applaud the teaching of Jesus Christ on the first day of the week, makes any pretence on Monday morning, or during the week, of acting upon the unselfish principles of the Sermon on the Mount, but that, on the contrary, he invariably acts upon the quite different principle that 'business is business.' That while preaching, or paying others to preach contentment to the poor, he himself is very much 'on the make.' Instigators of the warfare against the owners of property, or of brains, or of skill, or of persistent industry, say that many employers and managers are cruel sweaters for six days in the week, and that they are canting Christians on Sundays, when they are toadied to by ministers of religion for the sake of the money which the former give. It is, in fact, very frequently stated—even by Christian working men—that Christian employers are the hardest of task-masters, and that the more

religious they are, the harder they are in their dealings with their ' wage-slaves.'

The poor are constantly being told that, however much Christian sects may differ in other respects, they are agreed in one respect—namely, in the very high estimate which they place upon the collection. The masses are assured that the financial side of Christian effort is the most important side of it, and that it is, indeed, the key to the whole Christian position.

Then, again, those who are very poor are apt to assume that religion is only for (a) those who are comfortably off, for those who have a sufficient margin of energy and of leisure, and for those who have ' Sunday clothes ' ; or (b) for those whose poverty is so great that they are reduced to the humiliating and soul-destroying necessity of being dependent upon Christian doles, which pauperise, without adequately relieving, those who have been unfortunate in life's grim and cruel struggle for existence.

In the opinion of many, to become a Christian implies going over the upholders of the *status quo* : in other words, according to their view, becoming a Christian means joining the enemies of radical social reform. They say that, abroad, clericalism is opposed to Socialism, and that here the Church of England is Conservative in politics, and that the Nonconformist bodies are Liberal.

It is said that the workers have too long acquiesced in present conditions, and that they have too long adopted the 'slave morality' of non-resistance to capitalist oppression, and that they have too long embraced the mean ideal of meekly 'turning the other cheek' to the well-to-do capitalist smiter, and that it is high time that, instead of so doing, they began to display a little more self-reliance, self-assertion, and a spirit of aggressiveness. These teachers of the masses explain that they do not see why, if an employer takes away their coat, working men should voluntarily give the sweater their cloak also. They say that both Jewish and Christian morality admirably serve the greedy purposes of the 'haves' at the expense of the 'have nots.' 'Thou shalt not covet.' 'Contentment is great gain.' 'Be content with such things as ye have.'

Leaders of the class war against the successful may never have read the books of Frederick Nietzsche, but they adopt his teaching, to some extent, at least. They do not wish to foster, but to eliminate *individual* supermen who dominate their fellows, but they intend to bring about the dominance of the crowd—of the masses—as a super-class. They feel that if every man has a vote, the vast majority, which consists of the 'workers,' ought to be able to dominate the well-to-do classes. The leaders of

the class war apply Nietzsche's individualist ideas to mob-dominance, i.e. to the dominance of numbers. Their gospel is that the masses are more than strong enough to carry all before them by mere strength of numbers.

The modern teachers and *leaders* of the people may know but little of Bernard Shaw (although he, too, advocates Socialism), but, as individuals, they intend to be at least so far like his 'Superman' as to dominate their indifferent fellow men, to stir up fierce discontent, and to become the leaders of the discontented masses.

Those who are led, the rank and file, wish to depress to a common level all those who are in any degree in the position of such 'supermen,' whether they be leading men of their own class, or dominant persons of any other class. The masses, as a whole, intend to dominate all human life by sheer force of numbers acting in unison. At the present time they are convinced that the masses are governed and, indeed, enslaved by the classes, and also that the former are far too subservient to their own leaders. The masses maintain that they, as a coherent whole, should have, and that they ultimately will have, the power to carry all before them in their corporate capacity.

Most of the labour leaders in the House of Commons are not only Christians, but are devout

and enthusiastic Christians. This is due to various causes. In the first place, most of these men are leaders because they have learned how to lead in democratic Christian organisations, such as Brotherhoods. Then, again, being super-men, they tend to believe in the superhuman and divine; and being intelligent and active, they have been unable calmly to acquiesce in religious doubt as a permanent intellectual attitude towards ultimate problems. Moreover, because they have been religious, they have also been moral; and, consequently, having kept straight, they have won the confidence of their fellows. But, further, the atheistic element in Socialism, and the irreligious element in the 'People's Movement,' are on the wane.

Speaking of the 'People's Movement' reminds me of one or two important laws of the psychology of crowds, which will elucidate our subject.

Whenever a crowd collects, if it be dominated by a speaker who understands how to sway crowds, the individual characteristics of the component individuals in the crowd are largely lost, and a collective character is created in which cautiousness, diffidence, and the sense of responsibility largely disappear. These characteristics are superseded, to a great extent, by confidence, mob-passion, a feeling of corporate strength, and that absence of



responsibility which is born of the feeling that a whole crowd cannot well be punished, and that it is very difficult for the police or others to discover which individual members of the crowd have been primarily to blame for any violence which may have been displayed by the mob, as a whole. The sense of individuality, and the feeling of responsibility, are largely superseded, in such a crowd, by the corporate spirit. Further, primitive—i.e. more savage—characteristics tend to dominate those characteristics which have evolved more recently. The corporate character—i.e. the soul of the crowd—differs considerably from the personality of its individual constituents. There is, as I have said, an inspiring sense of corporate power, coupled with but a slight sense of individual responsibility, because a whole crowd cannot be arrested for violence in the way that an individual can be. I have myself been mobbed when attacking atheism in the parks, and have been unable to pick out the ringleader of the attack, because the crowd has deliberately acted as a whole, so that the blame must be spread over the whole mob. When the crowd disperses, each individual carries away with him some of the sense of corporate power, and some of the diminished sense of personal responsibility, which were created and fostered by the mob-spirit. The individual feels that he is

no *mere* individual, but that he is an integral part of democracy, of King Demos.

But let us return to the modern attitude of King Demos towards religion.

The representatives of the masses argue that the biological law of the struggle for existence (the effort to survive) is the universal law of nature: a law which, obviously, cannot be broken with impunity; that it is the very first law of life, and the most important factor in the cosmic scheme. Leaders of the 'People's Movement' contend, further, that if, indeed, there be a Ruler of the Universe, the laws of nature must be the expressions of His will. They further consider that, unquestionably, the royal road to success, for the workers, is—not by individual struggle, but—by combining together in a great conflict against the employers with the object of forcibly exacting more remuneration from them, either by the syndicalist method of sectional combinations of the employed, or by means of the acquirement by the majority (the State) of the 'means of production, of distribution, and of exchange.' Failing the acquirement of what is demanded by peaceful methods, revolution and anarchy are considered to be justified by many people.

The restless masses are apt to be very jealous of—and they are, therefore, inclined to be hostile

to—‘the powers that be,’ as such, and they are opposed to the *status quo*. Theirs is a spirit of rebellion. This tends to make them hostile in their attitude, not only towards the well-to-do, as a class, and also to the industrial system, which appears to them to consist of unfair and one-sided competition—a system in which they think that they see the cause of all their ills—but their profound dissatisfaction with the present conditions in which they live also tends to make them hostile towards the belief in any Supreme Governor of the Universe. They argue that if there be a Supreme Ruler, He is to blame for existing social, economic, and political conditions, because, if He has not actually created these conditions, He has, at least, permitted them to arise, and has acquiesced in their persistence. It is argued that if there be a Supreme Governor of the Cosmos, it is clear that He is not, and that He never has been, in the habit of looking after the weak and the unfortunate, whether in the plant world, or in the animal sphere, or on the human level of existence, but that, on the contrary, He is always on the side of the fittest, and is against the weak in their grim struggle for existence. Without shame, they recognise that—as individuals—they are not the fittest to survive, under present conditions, but they feel the corporate consciousness which characterises a crowd, and it is this which

inspires them with confidence for the future. They say that, as individuals, they have never had a chance, but that now, at length, the masses are about to acquire supreme power. They are out, as a crowd, to fight present conditions, and to contend for the eliminating of the present state of individual struggle for existence, which is, they say, part of the cruel cosmic scheme—if, indeed, there be any cosmic scheme at all.

It is further contended, as I have already said, that those who speak in God's name are on the side of the upper and middle classes in the struggle which has commenced in earnest between them and the masses. It is said that the parson—who, by birth, by education, and by the social position of his calling, belongs to the employer class—is paid by the well-to-do minority to keep the toilers from rising, *en masse*, and that the Bishop of London—who, owing to his unrivalled opportunities of acquiring information, is certainly in a position to know the actual facts of the case—distinctly says so. The quotation which I give below is from page 33 of 'Socialism and Christianity,' which is the official manifesto issued by the Socialist party of Great Britain. The pamphlet from which I quote is issued by the Socialist party as the authoritative announcement by that body of its attitude towards Christianity, and this Socialist

booklet is a fierce and able attack, by an energetic atheist organisation, upon theism in general and upon Christianity in particular.

‘ Addressing a meeting at Grosvenor House in support of the “ Bishop of London’s Fund,” on Tuesday, May 11, 1909, under the presidency of the Duke of Devonshire, the Bishop of London<sup>1</sup> quoted a statement made by a slum missionary, and described how a whole family in Notting Dale existed on 5s. a week, earned by a boy, and out of which 4s. was paid in rent. “ Can you expect that boy to believe in the goodness of God ? ” he said. “ Will he not want to know where God comes in ? Under all circumstances, I cannot regard the prospect as rosy. In forty years the Bishop of London’s Fund has built *two hundred and thirty churches*, and I believe saved London from such a revolution as would have astonished the world. If it were not for the influence of religion, perhaps the people of the East End would not take things so quietly as they sometimes do.”

‘ New churches “ for families starving on one shilling a week ! ” The Bishop did not appeal to his noble and wealthy hearers to remove hunger and poverty ; and the point of his appeal was the necessity not of feeding the starvelings, but of keeping them quiet. Such is the service religion renders to the propertied class. And the Bishop’s appeal was not in vain. Within a month Mr. Morrison, the city millionaire, left £10,000 to the Bishop of London’s Fund ; £10,000 to the Bishop of St. Albans’ Fund ; £10,000 to the East London Church Fund ; and £10,000 to the Rochester Diocesan Society. Mingled with the millionaire’s thoughts of death was his instinctive solicitude for the interests of his class ;

<sup>1</sup> *Lloyd’s News*, May 16, 1909.

and, out of the amassed wealth he could no longer enjoy, a portion was ear-marked for the purpose of keeping the victims of capitalism from revolting.'

In spite of what our friends the Christian Socialists tell us, the majority of popular Socialist agitators are, unquestionably, very definitely, and often very fiercely, opposed to theism in general and to Christianity in particular. Conversely, the majority of anti-Christian agitators are Socialists. No one who really knows the masses can fail to be very well aware of this fact, in whatever way he may endeavour to account for it. We hear a great deal from the Christian Socialists about the exceptions to this rule—that is to say, about men who are at once enthusiastic Christians, and who are also whole-hearted Socialists. I readily acknowledge that there are many and notable exceptions to the general rule ; but the fact remains that they are but exceptions to the rule that Socialists tend to be irreligious and anti-Christian, and that the opponents of religion tend to be Socialists.

The Christian religion was not founded for any one class or political party, but for all men. Further, Christianity is perfectly suited to men of every class and political party. It is a universal religion as wide in its application as mankind. Whatever a man's politics, or whatever his economic theories, or whatever his ideals with regard to sociology may be,

he should be religious, and his religion should be of the Christian variety. Christianity is a permanent religion, and therefore it ought not to be identified, exclusively, with any one of the various fluctuating political or economic creeds, which have their local and temporary vogue, and then pass away leaving Christianity still in existence and gaining strength century after century. Christianity ought not to be regarded as committed to any particular political or economic theory which may happen to be popular at any given time with any one section of the community. Jesus Christ, the Founder, was neither a politician nor the advocate of any particular economic theory. Christianity ought not to be committed to the adoption, nor to the rejection, of any particular political or economic creed, until such time as some one or another of these conflicting creeds turns out to be the best and the most Christian. The principles of Christianity are applicable to any and to every section of the community, and the teaching of Jesus Christ is intended for all men whatever their social, their political, or their economic theories may be.

On the other hand, we cannot agree with those who endeavour to divorce religion from daily life, and who consider that man's personality is constructed somewhat like a modern battleship—which is divided up into water-tight compartments.



We cannot agree that, owing to the supposed bulkhead arrangement within the human mind, the fact that a man entertains any particular social, or political, or economic creed has little or no bearing upon his religious beliefs, or vice versa. I do not believe that secular and religious ideas ought to be kept, nor even that they can successfully be kept, isolated in totally different 'compartments' of one's mind. The mind is one coherent whole; it is not a kind of honeycomb. If it be a fact that a man's religious beliefs have little or no bearing upon his political, or upon his social, or upon his economic ideals, or that these have little influence upon his religion, it is a fact which can hardly be regarded as creditable to religion. Surely religion should permeate the whole of a man's life, and it ought very considerably to colour his attitude towards social ideals, economic ideals, political ideals, and all his other ideals. To say that there is no necessary connection between religion and politics, or between religion and social ideals, or between religion and any other department of thought, or activity, is to assert that religion may be divorced from life and to imagine the existence of a schism in the unity of the human self. The human self is really a unity, and ought not to be divided up, artificially, by a kind of bulkhead arrangement. To adopt the watertight bulkhead conception of mind



is to entertain erroneous and long since exploded psychological views on the subject ; and to embrace the watertight partition theory of ideas is to misunderstand the many and the various causes which affect human opinions on any and on every subject.

If we are to face the actual facts, as they are found to be in real life (rather than to rely upon *a priori* theories with regard to what the facts ought to be, or as to what they are likely to be, or as to what we should wish them to be), we must recognise that Socialism everywhere tends to materialistic atheism, and that atheism tends to materialistic Socialism.

We should deal with facts as they really are. We should derive our theories from the facts, instead of attempting to deduce our facts from rigid, *a priori* theories. The really important question is : What actually are the facts ? rather than What do we consider that they ought to be ? In the parks, and in other open spaces, it is the atheistic, the materialistic, and the deterministic varieties of Socialism, on the one hand, and the Socialist varieties of atheism, of materialism, of secularism, and of determinism, on the other hand, which are the most energetic, the most ubiquitous, the most violent, and the most successful.

Atheist lecturers tend to preach Socialism because, as I have said, they find that they are much

more successful if they possess, and if they advocate—in addition to the mere uninspiring negations of materialism and of atheism, and in addition to the narrow philosophy of secularism—a positive social creed, a creed with ideals which make a strong appeal to the heart (and also to the self-interest of the poor). Socialism advocates a social creed with a definite and a moving call to practical work for the good of others (and of oneself, if one be poor).

Socialists tend to be atheists for various reasons. Those who enthusiastically oppose the *status quo*, whether the *status quo* be cosmic, religious, political, economic, or social, are apt to be drawn together by mutual sympathy, by a common sentiment of iconoclasm. They are drawn together by the sympathy born of community of aim, the mutual determination to upset and radically to change existing ideals, conceptions, and conditions.

Both Socialists and atheists, when struggling to collect and to keep a crowd, which is prone to wander to the other platforms, can appeal, as I have said, to a much larger section of the assembled people if they attack, at the same time, both (1) the religion and the ethics of Christianity, on the one hand, and also, on the other hand, (2) the social, the economic, and the political conditions of Christendom. Therefore, as we said earlier in this chapter,

every such speaker who wants to enlarge his crowd (at the expense of the speakers on the neighbouring platforms) is apt to teach both atheism and Socialism, in order to double the size of his audience, to enlarge the scope of his appeal, and to increase his collection.

Further, as we have already seen, if a man speaks on two subjects—instead of on only one—he finds it much easier to discover enough to say when he has to go on speaking for hours, which is usually the case in the open air. When a lecturer ceases to speak, his audience moves off to another lecturer, who is generally an opponent.

In passing, we may observe that some clergymen teach both Christianity and Socialism in church, and thereby enlarge their congregation of working men. Such preachers also find it less difficult to obtain sufficient material for their sermons than others, and are less likely to bore those of their hearers who are working people.

Ferri writes in 'Socialism and Positive Science,' published by the Independent Labour Party :—

'Socialism tends to substitute itself for religion. It knows that the absence, or lessening, of belief in God, is one of the most powerful factors in its extension.'

The hostility to the Christian religion, on the part of so many Socialists, is due, in a great measure,

to the fact that Socialism is the *religion*, and the only religion, of the most enthusiastic advocates of Socialism. I employ the word religion in its widest sense, and as meaning a person's total reaction to his environment ; his general attitude to existence ; his philosophy of life, warmed by emotion. The animosity to our religion, on the part of Socialists, is due largely to the tendency, which is unfortunately so general in man, for those who belong to one religion to hate and to suspect other and rival religious systems—and to hate them in proportion to *their similarity to his own*. The ordinary Christian, for example, does not hate Hinduism, nor Shintoism (still less does he hate atheism) : what he hates is either Roman Catholicism, or Nonconformity, or Anglicanism, or the system of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The severest critics of the High Church are the Low Church, and vice versa ; neither of them bother themselves much about atheism, materialism, or secularism. Similarly, the non-Christian religions to which Christians are most opposed are those which most nearly resemble their own—such as Judaism and Mohammedanism.

For its most enthusiastic adherents Socialism is :—

I. The philosophy which expresses their general outlook upon life—their total intellectual, moral, and spiritual reaction to their environment—an

environment which is regarded by Socialists as being radically defective. It is an environment which, according to atheistic Socialists, has no superhuman nor specifically spiritual element in it.

For the whole-hearted their Socialism is also :—

2. Their scheme for the uplifting of the masses generally (and also for personal self-advancement).

But, further :—

3. Socialism is a system which forms the mould into which the highest aspirations and ideals of its sincere and whole-hearted adherents are run, and in which they solidify and become stereotyped. (Man's aspirations have a way of running into, filling up, and solidifying in whatever mould may exist ready to hand.) In the absence of any other readily accessible and acceptable mould for their aspirations, the Socialist mould serves this purpose, and all that is best in the Socialist runs into this mould and becomes stereotyped in it.

Socialists very strongly object to the fact that the highest aspirations of so vast a section—and, indeed, of the most important part of the community—run into the specifically Christian mould and solidify in that mould.

To change the metaphor : Christianity is, in their view, the great vortex in the stream of human existence—the vortex into which humanitarian

sentiment is caught and sucked down and drawn right away from Socialism, to be 'wasted' on foreign missions, 'squandered' on Sunday-schools, 'thrown away' on the building of churches, and 'worse than wasted' on the financing of bishops and other ecclesiastics 'who oppose social reform.'

Those Socialists who hate Christianity do so, as I have said, very much for the same reason that so many Anglicans and Roman Catholics, in this country, fear and suspect one another—namely, because the adherents of each of these communions see in the system of the other communion a very powerful rival type of *religion* which is more or less successfully competing for available adherents, and is absorbing the supply of attention of the community, and thus is exhausting the supply.

Then, again, a large number of Socialists hate Christianity because they hold that it is the religion under which the present political, economic, and social state of society, which they abhor, has grown up into what it is. They argue that it was Christianity, when it was supreme, which brought about the existing social, political, and economic systems. They hate our religion because they believe that social *inequality* is largely the result of organised Christianity. They angrily refuse to 'submit themselves to all their governors, . . .

spiritual pastors, and masters,' or to 'order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters.' They do not recognise that the masses have any 'betters' in the Universe, and they do not want to be governed, but to govern themselves. They go further, and say: 'The notion of the transcendent God is but the counterpart and analogue of the transcendent governing class.'

A large number of Socialists consider, as I have said, that theism in general, and that Christianity in particular, misdirects man's aspirations after better things by drawing them away from urgent social and economic needs, to lavish them uselessly and foolishly upon costly and unnecessary bishops' palaces, and other ecclesiastical buildings, upon the stipends of reactionary bishops, conservative deans, &c., and, in fact, upon many things which anti-theists consider to be wholly unproductive, utterly worthless, and perniciously superstitious other-worldly activities of various kinds. (It is to the bishops' stipends that they most frequently refer.) Socialists are enraged at the idea of these supposed episcopal followers of Jesus Christ receiving so much money for following Him when vast numbers of people lack the ordinary necessities of life. Further, it is generally supposed that the incomes of bishops come, ultimately, out of the pockets of the poor.

Mr. Robert Blatchford, editor of the Socialist newspaper called *The Clarion*, wrote :—

‘ Seeing that a conflict between Socialism and religion (so-called) was inevitable, I attacked the Christian religion. It had to be done, and it will have to be finished.’<sup>1</sup>

And in *The Clarion* of September 23, 1904, he wrote : —

‘ I deny the existence of a Heavenly Father. I deny the efficacy of prayer. I deny the Providence of God. I deny the truth of the Old Testament and the New Testament. I deny the truth of the Gospels. I do not believe any miracle was ever performed. I do not believe that Christ was Divine. I do not believe that Christ died for man. I do not believe that he ever rose from the dead. I am strongly inclined to believe that he never existed at all.’

He not only attacked Christianity for a long time in his newspaper, but he also wrote some racy anti-Christian books, which have sold by the hundred thousand.

A writer in *The Clarion*, June 30, 1911, wrote :—

‘ In the Socialist vocabulary there is no room for any of these words : prayer, praise, reverence. They are not from one man to another, and since nothing is known of “ God,” they cannot be offered to Him !

. . . . Religion only degrades our children.’

<sup>1</sup> *The Clarion*, October 4, 1907.



Mr. H. M. Hyndman said on January 13, 1908, in his speech at the Imperial Industries Club :—

‘ Christianity is anarchism, not Socialism. There is no word in Christianity about Socialism.’

Engels said in the introduction to ‘ Socialism, Utopian and Scientific ’ :—

‘ Nowadays, in our evolutionary conception of the Universe, there is absolutely no room either for a Creator or a ruler.’

Lieb knecht said at the Halle Convention :—

‘ I am an atheist, I do not believe in God.’

In 1875 he wrote :—

‘ It is our duty as Socialists to root out the faith in God with all our might ; nor is anyone worthy of the name who does not consecrate himself to the spread of atheism.’

The inspirers of English Socialism are mostly foreigners. The rationalistic historian, Lecky, writes :—

‘ The doctrine of Marx is, in its essential features, the received and recognised doctrine of the great body, not only of German, but of French Socialists. It is the basis of the teaching of Mr. Hyndman, and some other Socialist writers in England, and it has a considerable and probably a growing body of adherents in nearly every country.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Democracy and Liberty.*

Karl Marx says :—

‘ The abolition of religion is a necessary condition for the true happiness of the people ’ (*Volksblatt*, No. 281).

He also asserts :—

‘ The idea of God is the keystone of a perverted civilisation. It must be destroyed. The true root of liberty, equality, culture, is Atheism.’<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Aveling, the husband of Marx’s daughter, writes :—

‘ We must face and wipe out those two curses : the curses of Capitalism and Christianity. Until that is done, nothing can be done.’

Bebel says :—

‘ Christianity and Socialism stand towards each other as fire and water.’

And—

‘ Christianity is the enemy of liberty and civilisation. It has kept mankind in slavery and oppression ’ (*Vorwärts*, 1901).

*Social Demokrat*, the official organ of German Socialism, May 25, 1880, tells us that :—

‘ Christianity is the bitterest foe of the social democracy.’

‘ Christianity is the greatest enemy of Socialism. When God is expelled from human brains, what is called

<sup>1</sup> *The Sham of Christian Socialism*.

the Divine Grace will at the same time be banished ; and when the heaven above appears to be nothing more than an immense falsehood, men will seek to create for themselves a heaven below ' (Zacher, p. 35).

' We declare ourselves atheistic. We seek the abolition of all religion, and the abolition of marriage ' (Bakunin).

' We aim, in the domain of politics, at Republicanism ; in the domain of economics, at Socialism ; and in the domain of what is to-day called religion, at Atheism ' (Bebel).

Professor Karl Pearson writes :—

The difference between Socialism and Christianity lies in the fact that the new polity is based upon a conception of morality different *in toto* from the current Christian ideal, which it does not hesitate to call anti-social and immoral.'

The Christian's ideal is to do the Will of God ; the anti-Christian Socialist's ideal is to do the will of the people. Most people, however, draw a clear and marked distinction between *Vox Dei* and *vox populi*.

A very favourite argument of the anti-Christian Socialist is that until material conditions are very different from what they now are, it is a cruel mockery to ask, and still more to expect, men and women to lead moral or beautiful lives. Therefore,

what we want, they say, is not ethical preaching, but, on the contrary, social and economic reform. They consider these to be almost antithetical.

They say that it is imperatively necessary for the poor to take a very great deal more 'thought for the morrow,' and that they must systematically 'seek first' better material conditions, and that only after they have secured improved conditions will a more ideal moral life become at all possible. Salvation by social organisation and by political institutions is regarded by them as an ideal which is the antithesis of salvation by the adoption, on the part of the individuals of the community, of the ideal of Christlikeness. Socialists are fond of attacking such sayings of Jesus Christ as the following, which is translated thus in the Authorised Version of the Bible :—

'Take no thought for the morrow, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor wherewithal ye shall be clothed. . . . Ye cannot serve God and Mammon,' &c.

From the fact that man cannot serve both God and Mammon—a fact which they thoroughly endorse—they reach the opposite conclusion from that advocated by Jesus Christ. They say that, seeing that man cannot simultaneously serve both God and Mammon, and that bearing in mind that a man must serve Mammon or starve, they are

out to fight 'the God idea' because it stands in the way of their worldly programme.

Anti-Christian Socialists contend that, attending to one thing at a time, one should work upwards from the lower to the higher—from the material to the psychic—from the amelioration of the deplorable material conditions in which the bulk of the masses live, nowadays, to the improvement of their ethical conduct. First of all ameliorate the conditions of life, they say; afterwards, preach ethics—if you think it worth while—but in any case do not teach Christian ethics which are anti-Socialistic. They assert that social and economic conditions, being what they are, render an ideal life of any kind, for the great bulk of the masses, quite impossible.

They argue that while the fierce struggle for the bare necessities of life involves, for the masses, an existence like that of a writhing mass of starving vipers imprisoned in a transparent glass jar, surrounded by an abundance of luscious food which they cannot help seeing and craving for, but which they cannot, as yet, manage to get at, it is practically impossible for the average working man with a family dependent upon him, or for the ordinary small tradesman who can barely keep himself and his family out of the workhouse, to be honest, unselfish, or otherwise moral in the unworldly

Christian sense of the word moral. It is often said that current ethics have been created by the dominant classes, and have been forced upon the dominated classes, and that the latter ought not to be enslaved any longer by the ethics evolved by Jewish capitalists. They instance: 'Thou shalt not steal,' and then say that the capitalist class is rich because it steals, legally, what belongs of right to the people who produce the wealth,<sup>1</sup> and that if the latter steal the proceeds of their own labour back again, they are only doing what they have a perfect right to do.

What is required, we are told, is not preaching unselfishness to people who cannot afford the luxury of being unselfish, but, on the contrary, what is required is the preaching of self-assertiveness and of the imperative necessity for the amelioration of the present deplorable conditions of life in which the vast bulk of the people have to exist.

The great majority of working men, if they live in a poor district of a large town, are firmly convinced that it is perfectly obvious that the conditions of life for the vast bulk of 'the people' are not only absolutely unjust, as well as being most pernicious, but that these conditions are also quite avoidable and never ought to have arisen.

<sup>1</sup> It is supposed that wealth is produced by the employed, not by the employer.

They say that the conditions are most unjust and pernicious, because 'the workers, who really produce all the wealth,' derive far less benefit from what they produce than is secured by those who produce nothing, and who, instead of producing anything, employ working men to create wealth for them. These working men are sure that employers make far more than their fair share of profit out of the workers' toil. They also ask how much wealth shareholders produce. Further, as I have said, they consider that because present conditions of relative rewards for production have gradually grown up to be what they are under Christianity, Christianity is certainly to blame for these inequalities of remuneration. It is argued that, even if Christendom did not actually create the present unjust and cruel state of things, as the direct result of the individualistic Christian ethic, Christendom has, certainly, so far acquiesced in existing social and economic conditions as to permit them to continue.

It is contended, further, that Christianity, with its ancient sacred literature, is a doggedly conservative force which, as such, tends to perpetuate the *status quo* because it is the *status quo*, and is, therefore, orthodox. 'God is in this heaven, all is right with the world'; and 'whatever is, is best,' is, they say, the keynote of Christian conservatism.

It is also contended, as we have seen, by the majority of Socialist agitators, that Christianity has somehow become—and that in fact it has been for long ages—essentially the creed of what Mr. Blatchford calls the ‘upper dog’; that is to say, the creed of the successful combatant in the grim struggle for existence who, because he has been successful, is naturally interested in retaining his dominant position by keeping up the present social and economic condition of things, and that the well-to-do person says to the now rebellious ‘bottom dog’: ‘Blessed be ye poor’;<sup>1</sup> ‘Be content with your wages’;<sup>2</sup> ‘You will be rewarded, *hereafter*, for non-resistance to capitalist exploitation here and now.’ The ‘Word of God’ says distinctly: ‘The powers that be are ordained of God. He that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.’<sup>3</sup> And in quoting this text they suppose that by damnation is meant eternal burning in a hell which is as mythical and non-existent as is a heaven beyond the grave.

Atheistic Socialists argue that the ‘bottom dog’ (who, they tell us, usually has no religion) will never get his rights, so long as the attention, the enthusiasm, and the finance of those who, owing

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke vi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke iii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Romans xiii, 1.



to their possession of money, of position, of culture, of brains, or of leisure, are in a position really to do something to improve matters, are being diverted into other worldly channels. By other worldly channels they mean such channels as religious services and devotional meetings, which are provided for those who have the leisure and who possess the margin of energy which permits of their appreciating such things. Socialists also deplore the amount of money—made, as they think, out of exploiting labour—which is spent upon preaching the Christian religion to subject races: races which, according to our opponents, already have the various kinds of indigenous religions which—being the kind of people they are—suit them far better than our alien religion would suit them.

Atheistic Socialists maintain that Christianity is the great cancerous growth which, in proportion as it develops and expands, exhausts in ecclesiastical and in other worldly directions the milk of human kindness which should flow, and which, if left to itself, would naturally flow into purely humanitarian channels. They say that Christianity, having been tried for 1900 years, has already had far more than a fair chance to show what it can achieve in the way of justice to the masses, and that because, during nearly two thousand

years, it has obviously and completely failed to secure bare justice for the poor, it is now high time that secularistic Socialism had its long-delayed opportunity to show what it can do on purely secularistic lines.

The atheistic Socialist argues that every advance, both in social amelioration and also in natural science (which, when practically applied, greatly alleviates human ills), has been in spite of much opposition from organised Christianity, which is the most rigidly conservative and the most reactionary power in the land.

Anti-Christian Socialists contend, further, that the system of somewhat indiscriminate charity upon which Christians 'so greatly pride themselves,' far from helping to improve the general conditions of the poor, has merely tinkered with a great economic problem and, by so doing, has done more than anything else to prevent this most important of all problems from being solved on truly scientific, national, and adequate lines. They say that the haphazard distribution of parochial doles by patronising parsons, and by ignorant, inquisitive, and tactless district visitors, who have not, in the least, mastered the great problem of the *causes* and of the *cure* of poverty, has (*a*) merely humiliated the recipients of such petty doles, has undermined their self-respect, has encouraged pauperism,

cadging, and hypocrisy ; and (b) has enabled the recipients of such so-called charitable ' relief ' to work for less than a living wage, and has thus tended to keep down the standard of wages in the labour market ; and (c) has kept the urgent problems of unemployment and of poverty from being adequately dealt with by the nation, as a whole, on systematic, businesslike, and truly social lines.

They also say that Christian charity merely means that those who have amassed much money by ' exploiting the wage-slaves,' patronisingly, and in the name of charity, give back merely a small percentage of their ill-gotten gains to the rightful owners, and that this percentage of ill-gotten gains is restored with the two-fold object of :—

1. Keeping the once patient but now, at last, restive masses from rising, and :—

2. With the object of providing, for the donors of the charity, a kind of ' fire insurance premium,' in view of what they, themselves, rightly recognise to be richly deserved (but which is, unfortunately, in reality, a purely imaginary), hell-fire hereafter.

' Not charity, but just and wise economics,' is a war-cry of Socialists ; and they say that they intend to fight the battle out to a finish, and that in that fight Christianity is on the side of the enemies of social reform.

Mr. George Haw, who is, I believe, a Christian Socialist (author of 'No Room to Live,' &c.), writes in 'The Religious Doubts of Democracy : ' <sup>1</sup>

' To-day, Christians, adherents of the most successful people's movement known to history, have to face the fact that the leaders of the newest people's movement—Socialism—are nearly all against them. For this state of things, Christians are as much to blame as Socialists. The leaders of Socialism are carrying the working classes of every country with them, not in their economic teaching alone, but to a very large extent in their opposition to Christianity. Workpeople, the first to heed Christianity, the first to teach it, the first to strive and suffer for it, are everywhere being led away from the movement they made. "Christianity," says Bebel, "the prevailing spiritual expression of the present economic order, must pass away as a better social order arrives." '

' Liebknecht maintains that Socialism sets itself against Christianity because "Christianity is the religion of private property and of the respectable classes." '

' "The first word of religion," Friedrich Engels declares, "is a lie." '

' "The idea of God," says Karl Marx,<sup>2</sup> "must be destroyed." '

' That is clear enough as to the attitude of the

<sup>1</sup> Pages 1, 2, and 7.

<sup>2</sup> The other day a humourist remarked of these leaders : ' All of them have good old Scotch names.' The most violent atheists in the parks are foreigners.

founders and leaders of Social Democracy on the Continent. The same anti-Christian tendency has been shown by men who have tried to build up a Social Democratic Party in England. Mr. Belfort Bax says of Socialism :

‘ It utterly despises “ the other world ” with all its stage properties—that is, the present objects of religion.’

‘ In his work, “ God and my Neighbour,” Mr. Blatchford has joined with Bebel and Liebknecht and Engles and Marx in denouncing the Christian religion. “ Christianity,” says Mr. Blatchford, “ is a fabric of impossibilities, erected upon a foundation of error.” ’

‘ Again, “ I am working for Socialism,” says Mr. Blatchford, “ when I am attacking a religion that is hindering Socialism.” ’

The Socialist Party of Great Britain, is, of course, only one of the many Socialist bodies, and it is one of the most atheistic. This organisation holds some 2000 open-air meetings a year. It also has its own newspaper and publishes its own booklets. In quoting the following passages, I do not suggest that they are typical of Socialist utterances, but they may interest the reader. Although they emanate from one of the most anti-Christian sections of Socialists, they express the views of very many Socialists who belong to other Socialist bodies.

The S.P.G.B. issues a pamphlet entitled 'Socialism and Religion.' In the preface to the second edition (p. 6) I find the following: 'It'—the pamphlet—'is issued not as the view of an individual, but as the accepted manifesto of the Socialist Party on the subject.'

'It is a profound truth that Socialism is the natural enemy of religion. Through Socialism alone will the relations between men in society, and their relations in nature, become reasonable, orderly, and completely intelligible, leaving no nook or cranny for superstition. The entry of Socialism is, consequently, the exodus of religion.'

'Our brief outline of the natural history of religion has shown that Socialism, as a system of society, means the end of supernatural beliefs. But that is only half our present task. What is the relation of Socialism as a propagandist movement towards modern Christian teaching? Or, since general principles should here be first considered, Is socialism, as a working philosophy, also opposed to modern religious ideas?'

'In the first place, all religious teaching is directly opposed to the scientific materialism, or monism, which is an integral part of Socialist philosophy. As Dr. Shadwell said at the 1909 Church Congress at Swansea: "The purely materialistic view on which Socialism is based is absolutely opposed to Christian teaching."'<sup>1</sup>

'Since Nature has been discovered to work according to ascertainable and inevitable order, society, as part

<sup>1</sup> *Socialism and Religion*, page 18.

of nature, can be no exception. The Christian idea of free will and supernatural interference, therefore, become absurd, and give way to determinism.' <sup>1</sup>

'But the contradiction in terms, known as the Christian Socialist, is inevitably antagonistic to working class interests and the waging of the class struggle. His policy is the conciliation of classes, the fraternity of robber and robbed, not the end of classes. His avowed object, indeed, is usually to purge the Socialist movement of its materialism, and this, as we have seen, means to purge it of its Socialism, and to divert it from its material aims to the fruitless chasing of spiritual will-o'-the-wisps. A Christian Socialist is, in fact, an anti-Socialist.' <sup>2</sup>

'As an eminent prelate said at the 1909 Church Congress at Swansea: "Individualism is of the very essence of Christianity," and Christianity, we may add, is, by the same token, the very antithesis of Socialism.' <sup>3</sup>

'Clearly, then, the basis of Socialist philosophy is utterly incompatible with religious ideas; indeed, the latter have been reduced to logical absurdity in what is called "Christian Science." . . . The concept of God as an explanation of the Universe is becoming entirely untenable in this age of scientific inquiry. The laws of the persistence of force and the indestructibility of

<sup>1</sup> If no individual man has any freedom of will, then mankind in the aggregate has no freedom of will, and consequently Socialism has no freedom of will: and if everything is wholly determined by circumstances over which man has no control, it is difficult to see how social or economic or political changes can be brought about by the will of Socialism.

<sup>2</sup> *Socialism and Religion*, page 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 28.



matter, and the unending interplay of cause and effect, make the attempt to trace the origin of things to an anthropomorphic God, Who had no cause, as futile as is the Oriental cosmology which holds that the world rests on an elephant, and, as an after-thought, that the elephant stands on a tortoise.'

'The Creation idea is unsupported by evidence, and is in conflict with every scientific law. Socialism is consistent only with that monistic view which regards all phenomena as expressions of the underlying matter-force reality, and as parts of the unity of Nature which interact according to inviolable laws. It is the application of science, the arch-enemy of religion, to human social relationships; and just as the basic principle of the philosophy of Socialism finds itself in conflict with religion, so does it, as a propagandist movement, find religion acting against it, as we shall show.'<sup>1</sup>

After maintaining that what is required is not ethical teaching, but the alteration of present conditions, the pamphlet says:—

'The dominant class impose their wishes upon the many in the form of ethics or moral instruction.'

'Hence we are concerned not with ethics, but with Socialism; for to be obsessed with the need for ethical codes is to be the dupe of capitalist ideas. Ethics, even when honest, are but attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable antagonisms of capitalist society, and are doomed to sterility. With the abolition of class antagonisms, the attempt to reconcile them becomes superfluous, and so ethics disappear.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Socialism and Religion*, page 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, page 29.



[I quite agree that ethics do certainly tend to disappear with the advance of Socialism of this kind.]

‘ Instead of impatience under robbery, resistance to oppression, and the class struggle for a better life, which the Socialist recognises as virtues, the propertied class insist upon patience under exploitation, submission, veneration of the institutions of meekness before the oppressor, and love for those who grind the faces of the poor, as the ‘ virtues ’ they require in the lower orders.’

‘ Socialism and religion are, as we have seen, irreconcilably opposed to each other.’ <sup>1</sup>

‘ Under all its multifarious forms, the modern mission of religion is to cloak the hideousness and injustice of social conditions and keep the exploited meek and submissive.’ <sup>2</sup>

‘ As Marx has put it : “ Religion is the opium of the people.” ’

‘ No man can be consistently both a Socialist and a Christian. It must be either the Socialist or the religious principle that is supreme, for the attempt to couple them equally together betrays charlatanism or lack of thought.’ <sup>3</sup>

The above quotations are, in my opinion, valuable not so much because they are official pronouncements of a society which is one of the

<sup>1</sup> *Socialism and Religion*, page 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* page 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* page 36.

Socialist bodies, but because they represent a *very considerable body of popular opinion*. Many working men, however, would doubtless insert the word Syndicalism for the word Socialism, in the passages quoted, before they would endorse the opinions expressed in them.

The Free Thought Socialist League's publications are a very great deal more violently anti-theistic and anti-Christian than are those of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. The following titles indicate, to some extent, the nature of their contents :—

‘ Christ : The Great Enemy of the Human Race.’

‘ Life of Christ : Comically Illustrated.’

### A REPLY TO THE FOREGOING

I ONCE found a pet dog, to which I was a complete stranger, caught in a steel rabbit-gin. It was screaming out, incessantly, with pain. Naturally, I immediately set to work to get it out of the trap. Mine was by no means an easy task ; but, in spite of the dog's violent attempts to bite me while I was rescuing it, I eventually succeeded. I did not blame the dog for its bitterness and ferocity, because I knew that its state of mind was caused by the great pain which it was enduring, and which

prevented it from realising that, so far from being the cause of its suffering, I was trying to rescue it from a position which I had done nothing to cause. The hostility of so many of the poor towards well-to-do Christians—many of whom are doing as much as they can for the poor—somewhat resembles the hostility towards me which was displayed by the dog above mentioned. The sufferings of the poor make them bitter, and this bitterness is carefully fostered by skilled agitators.

I cannot here enter into details with regard to the complex question as to what are the chief causes of poverty and of unemployment, but I would point out that three of the causes are :—

1. The congestion of vast masses of people in large towns, leaving the country districts—especially in the colonies—very inadequately populated.

Christianity is not responsible for this congestion.

2. The tendency amongst all living creatures to increase in numbers beyond the available means of subsistence.

3. The very varied capacity of individuals to supply the needs of the community and thus to receive employment and remuneration. The open market is hard upon those who have nothing marketable to dispose of.

Christianity is not responsible for the laws of supply and demand.

The teaching of Jesus Christ, and man's efforts to walk in His footsteps—in other words, *Christ-likeness*—does not produce poverty; it does not intensify the struggle for existence; but, on the contrary, it tends to make the successful and well-to-do relieve the distress of the unsuccessful. It teaches those who are the fittest to survive—in present conditions—to support those who are least fitted to survive, owing to their incapacity to correspond actively and vitally with their environment.

Nothing is gained by fomenting class war. It is a fallacy that the entire success of any one class must be wholly at the expense of the other classes. All classes are dependent upon the other classes, and each benefits by the well-being of the others. Not hatred and opposition, but love and co-operation, are needed. What humanity requires is more of the Christian spirit, not less of it. If every man followed in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, a great deal of the present appalling misery would disappear.

This booklet is not specifically concerned either with economics or with politics, as such, but with religion and ethics. It deals with the religious and the moral outlooks upon life rather than with the political and the economic aspects of existence. Therefore, these pages do not deal with Socialism as an economic or as a political theory, but only

with the relationship which actually exists between various sections of organised Socialism and religion.

In this age of specialisation, when there are both political and economic specialists, it can hardly be regarded as one of the innumerable duties of clergymen—who are specialists in religion and in Christian ethics—to give a lead to humanity, either in the sphere of economics or in that of politics. The clergy are not officially concerned with other people's political and economic theories. In so far as religious and ethical factors are involved in people's economic and political theories, the special business of the clergy, and the business of the Church, as a whole, is to leaven all economic theories and all political parties with Christian principles, and to instil into the adherents of every economic and political creed some measure of disinterested Christ-likeness. It is the duty of Christians to fulfil this function towards modern Socialism, as well as towards modern Conservatism.

Until such time as the political, economic, and social millenium, forecasted by the Socialist, or by any other prophet, is brought about by society—a millenium during which everybody will be comfortably off, irrespective of any relation between the size of the population and its means of subsistence, and during which millennial period everyone will enjoy plenty of leisure—*some section of the*

*community must, in the interim, look after the poor and the unfortunate.* Until such time as the community, as a whole, provides adequately for every individual, some section of the community must furnish the necessities of existence where they are lacking. Tracts on the subject of economics, and inflammatory speeches on political topics, however admirable they may be, and however useful, cannot, as yet, serve as an adequate substitute for the large amount of philanthropic work which the community *now leaves Christianity to do.* Whatever may be the case a thousand or a million years hence, such philanthropic work as is now being done by Christianity is imperatively necessary, and it is not in the least likely to be taken over—from Christian bodies, either now or in the near future—by any of the various anti-religious Socialist bodies, or by any of the existing syndicalist organisations. They do not, any of them, suggest for a moment that they are likely to take over what we are now doing. Socialists are agitating for the community, as a whole, to take over all necessary humanitarian work. But unless and until the community, as a whole, does so, humanitarian effort must continue to be organised by those who are now organising it. It will be a very long time before the philanthropic work which the Christian Church is now doing is taken over by the State.

Further, even if an ideal social economic and

political theory has already been devised—and very few people imagine, for a moment, that any theory has as yet been created which is by any means ideal—or even if such a perfect theory be devised hereafter : *if it be applied by worldly, by selfish, by cruel, by grasping officials ; if it be administered by officials who are self-seeking materialists and thorough-going determinists—even the most perfect political and economic system is sure to be exceedingly badly administered.* If, under the future system, both the officials who govern, and also the people who are governed, be selfish and grasping, and if they be also consistent materialistic determinists, any ideal community, under such circumstances, will be quite impossible.

Mr. Blatchford, perhaps the most popular advocate of Socialism, describes a particularly disgusting crime—the most disgusting that his imagination could conceive—and he says of the perpetrator of it, who was perfectly sane, that what he did was ‘ the only thing that he could do at the moment that he did it.’<sup>1</sup> His point is that, whatever anybody does, however devilish, or however divine, is ‘ the only thing that he can do at the moment that he does it.’ If determinism be adopted by the Socialistic, or by any other kind of government that may arise in the future—that government, in proportion as it acts

<sup>1</sup> He does not say the same of the Germans and their behaviour in Belgium, but quite the contrary.

down to that creed which emphatically denies all human responsibility, will ignore and will deny the *moral* distinction between right and wrong ; between heroism, on the one hand, and bestiality and villainy, on the other hand.

If materialism be the future philosophy of the new and reorganised state of the future, the standard of human life in that state will be an exceedingly low one. (Many leading Socialists now advocate the abolition of marriage and the community of wives and children.)

If the opponents of the teaching of Jesus Christ succeeded in banishing His ideals from man's ethical system ; if the enemies of Christianity stamp out His teaching that money, brains, and social or official position are but held in trust on behalf of our less fortunate brothers ; if Socialism gets rid of Christ's teaching that we have a Heavenly Father, a Saviour, and a future life ; if Socialism eliminates from public opinion the appreciation of Christ's teaching that unselfishness is the greatest good, and that we shall be called to account by God, both now and hereafter, if we act selfishly ;—if, I say, these and other similar ideals are progressively weakened, and ultimately eliminated from man's ethical codes, and if worldliness or secularism be the ideal that is substituted for them in the future, what a state of society we shall have !



The essence of Jesus Christ's teaching is : ' He that would save his life—i.e. he who would lavish it upon himself—shall lose it,' and this applies also, and no less, to whole communities.

This ideal of self-sacrifice is the very antithesis of the materialistic and secularistic Socialism which is preached in the parks.

The animosity towards Jesus Christ and towards His teaching, on the part of those impecunious people who claim to be the only genuine social reformers of our time, is somewhat unintelligible. Jesus Christ worked as a carpenter until He was thirty years old. His twelve apostles were also working men, fishermen, &c., except one who had been a tax-collector. Our Lord's most attentive hearers were the poor. Jesus Christ and the ' twelve ' worked so hard for ' the people ' that frequently they had no time to eat.<sup>1</sup>

What exactly did Jesus Christ and His apostles teach ? Jesus Christ's teaching was that unselfish *love* is all important. He taught us that upon the love of God, and upon the love of man, ' hang all the law and the prophets '—i.e. that the primary source of all righteousness and the basis of the highest happiness is love (of God and man). He said that God is our Father, and that because He loves us we are drawn to love Him. When we love God, we

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark iii. 20 and vi. 31.

try to serve Him and to please Him. Jesus Christ taught us that this can be done by serving our fellow men. We are all brothers, not merely because all of us are, perhaps, ultimately descended from a single couple, which died millions of years ago, nor because we all belong to a single class in society, but because we all have the same Father—God. The Christian standpoint is that, having one Father, we form but a single family, and every member of it can and must please the All-Father by acting the part of brother or sister to those who stand in need of love.

Jesus Christ practised perfectly what He preached. He gave up all self-interest and devoted Himself, heart and soul, to show how 'heaven' may begin here 'upon earth.' To the heavenly minded He could say: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you,' and amongst you.

Those who are, themselves, unheroic, selfish, and grasping, and who, being what they are, cannot, in the least, understand disinterestedness—because they themselves are so mean—always ask whenever any heroism is displayed upon earth: 'How much did he make out of it?' They say that everyone is 'on the make.' They judge others by themselves, as we all must do. Well, when Jesus Christ gave up working as a carpenter, He no longer had a home,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. viii. 20 and Luke ix. 58.

and the material reward meted out by society to Jesus Christ for His life's work was crucifixion. Those who seized the opportunity to help themselves to His property had nothing to divide but his clothes.<sup>1</sup>

One would think that the 'have nots' would sympathise with, and not make violent attacks upon, the Poor Man who loved the poor and who gave His life for humanity. The 'common people heard him gladly' in Palestine of old until they were set against him by interested agitators. History is constantly repeating itself; Jesus Christ was not the only 'poor man's friend' to give Himself up, heart and soul, to the cause of humanity, and who was violently attacked by the very people for whom He lived and suffered and died.

It may be argued that those who helped themselves to Jesus Christ's property—in other words, those who appropriated His clothes—were more successful in their struggle for existence (and for property) than was Jesus Christ, who lost both His life and all His small possessions; and that the Roman soldiers, thereby, showed themselves to have adopted the wiser and, for that reason, the better—i.e. the more moral, because the more utilitarian—course. But it is profoundly true that 'he that

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xix. 23; St. Mark xxvii. 35; St. Luke xxiii. 34; St. John xix. 23.

would save his life shall lose it'; that the truly selfish man is the really poor man, the man with the poorest nature; and that he that is unselfishly willing to sacrifice himself is really the man whose life is truly rich, and who makes the most of his life: I mean that that man is the most genuinely successful, and the most truly rich, whose own nature and life are full and rich and sympathetic and unselfish. The truly poor man is he who is mean, selfish, grasping, and unsympathetic, whatever material possessions he may or may not accumulate. 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth,'<sup>1</sup> but it consists rather in what he *is*. Wealth of love and riches of sympathy are more valuable—i.e. they are better worth having, and they make man more truly rich—than the possession of stocks and shares, or the possession of a communal interest in the stocks and shares which now belong of right to others.

This is not the place to dilate upon, nor to account for, the existence of two such opposite ideals as those of the mercenary man and those of the unselfish man; but it is clearly the former who has found heaven, here and now, and who also enjoys a foretaste of a heaven beyond the grave. The mercenary man finds hell, and is heading straight for unhappiness beyond the grave.

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xii. 15.

Jesus Christ, who spoke 1900 years ago, may be accused of never having told the trade unions of the twentieth century to hand over their funds to the many different rival sections of modern Socialism. He may also be accused of never having advocated the expenditure of benefit funds upon class warfare. He may be accused of not speaking primarily—in A.D. 30—of the social and economic problems of the twentieth century, A.D. He may be blamed for not addressing Himself, primarily (1900 years ago), to Europeans of modern times, who live in conditions which are, in most respects, very different from those which existed in Palestine in His own day. The problems of twentieth-century politics and economics are largely new. Every conceivable objection has been and is being raised against Jesus Christ's teaching by people who—being what they are—emphatically do not like Jesus Christ's teaching.

All that I am concerned to do, however, in these pages is (not to change people's standards of value) but to point out what it really was that Jesus Christ actually taught. Each individual reader must judge for himself whether that teaching was good or bad, as compared with modern codes of ethics which claim to be superior to His code.

Christ lived in Palestine—a little country which was about the size of Wales. It had been conquered

by the world-empire—Rome. The Jews were ripe for their hopeless rebellion, which resulted—some forty years after the Crucifixion—in the slaughter (according to one contemporary authority) of a million Jews, and in slavery for 90,000. It also resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and in the political extinction of Israel as a nation. Jesus Christ lived and died under the iron Roman despotism of 1900 years ago. What has been handed down to us of His teaching has been transmitted because it was felt by the early Christians to be suitable for the people of that age, and for their conditions of life. In His day, as in every succeeding age—except amongst savages<sup>1</sup>—mankind might have been divided into two classes (1): the ‘haves’ and (2) the ‘have nots.’ But there was not the same severe ‘unemployment problem,’ and the struggle for existence was not nearly so great.

What did Jesus Christ teach about the relationship between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’? It is quite true that He did not say to the latter: ‘In such and such ways, you can help yourselves to the possessions of the “haves.”’ But He made it very clear to those who ‘have’ that what they possess is not really their own, to do just what they like with, but that their possessions are merely held in trust for the human

<sup>1</sup> Many savage tribes practise Socialism,

Brotherhood—which includes many who ‘have not.’ Christ said that some members of the great family of God are ‘clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day’; while other members of the same great family are like poor diseased Lazarus. Jesus Christ said that if the former ignore the latter, they must bear in mind the day of reckoning, when rich and poor appear together before the Father of both.<sup>1</sup>

Christ and ‘the twelve’ had a common purse—a joint fund.<sup>2</sup> The early Church, at first, adopted the same communal principle,<sup>3</sup> and, as long as they expected the end of the world to come immediately, they had all things in common. Jesus Christ did not say, however, that it was wicked to provide for one’s wife and family; in fact, one of His followers said that ‘He that provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own household, hath denied faith and is worse than an infidel.’<sup>4</sup>

‘Nor did Jesus Christ say that what is so provided—in benefit societies or otherwise—belongs, of right, to those who, themselves, have not saved anything for their families. He did not condemn the general practice of thrift, the ‘laying by for a rainy day.’ So far from doing any of these things, He founded

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xvi. 19, &c.

<sup>2</sup> St. John xii. 6 and 13, 29.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iv. 32–35.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. v. 8.

the greatest friendly society that the world has ever seen—a friendly society which is helping the destitute, healing the sick, visiting the widows and orphans, and, further, is doing nearly all the necessary work which is gradually improving social conditions. As the Apostle tells us: ‘Pure religion and undefiled before God our Father is this: to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.’<sup>1</sup> Atheistic Socialists, on the other hand, are doing little else than to contribute inflammatory speeches, tracts, and booklets on the subject of their class war. If the ministrations of the Church at the sick man’s bed-side leave something to be desired, it is not for those men to complain who, themselves, do nothing better for the sick man than to grumble at conditions, while they eat up the grapes which the district visitor has brought for the invalid.

Jesus Christ did not say that it is wrong (or otherwise) for individuals to possess the ‘sinews of war’ for the long campaign against human want and misery. His little band of followers always had such a fund.<sup>2</sup> We may be sure that it was administered wisely until Judas—the treasurer—turned thief.

On one occasion Jesus Christ found a notable

<sup>1</sup> St. James i. 27.

<sup>2</sup> St. John xiii. 29.



bungler in the great art of trusteeship<sup>1</sup>—a trustee who was worse than useless as such—a treasurer who did not know the rudiments of his duties.<sup>2</sup> Because he was a failure as a trustee, Christ told him (in effect) to hand in his books and cease to be a treasurer in God's great Friendly Society. Jesus Christ did not mean to imply that *every* man was likewise to hand over his duty and privilege as treasurer in God's great Brotherhood, and to divide out the accumulated funds, which he holds in trust, distributing them amongst the individual members of the society. Nor did He advocate handing them over to the (Roman) State. He did not lay down the law that when a man makes some money, he ought to scatter the whole of it to the crowd, or to hand it over to the Socialists, or in any other way to resign his position as trustee. In fact, there were no Socialists then in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> Nor did He suggest that men who had earned money should scatter it in the crowd, and that the crowd which scrambles for the gold should change the money into coppers, and scramble the half-pence in the streets, or give it over to the State, or to any particular political party. Nor did He advocate any other system of redistribution of wealth—such,

<sup>1</sup> The young man who had great possessions. (St. Matt. xix. 16.)

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. xix. 31 ; St. Mark x. 21.

<sup>3</sup> The Essenes were not Socialists.

e.g., as the method of the taxation of the 'haves' out of the State or out of existence by the 'have nots.' He neither advocated nor repudiated any of these methods of redistribution ; He did not deal with this subject at all. He expressed no opinion upon the adoption of *compulsion on the part of the 'have nots.'* But in St. Luke xii. 13 we do read the following:—

'And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you ? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness : for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth.'

It is true that the 'haves' are often covetous ; but the 'have nots' are not always less covetous.

Jesus Christ, being a wise Teacher, adapted His teaching to the capacity of His pupils (of 1900 years ago). Yet nothing that He said is 'out of date' now in this twentieth century of the Christian era. Not only so, but His ideals (of nearly 2000 years ago) have not yet been realised in the Church, still less in the State, and least of all in atheistic Socialist bodies. Nor will our Lord's ideals be realised until Church and State, and all political parties, become less secular, less materialistic, and less self-seeking ; and until

they become more religious and unselfish. Rich and poor alike need to become less grasping and more disinterested. We are suffering from too much secularism and materialism—not from too much Christlikeness.

The community talks a great deal about ‘Christianity,’ but it knows too little about Christ and the ‘New Testament.’ What is worse, most of us do not even act up to what we do know. We are too secular.

As the Christian Socialist, Mr. Haw, says:—

‘Churchpeople who think that the service of God is a sufficient religion, without the service of man, are making the same mistake as those people outside the Churches who think the service of man is a sufficient religion without the service of God. . . . Churchgoers want reminding that the Fatherhood of God is impossible without the brotherhood of man, just as much as Socialists want reminding that the brotherhood of man is impossible without the Fatherhood of God.’

Yes, and Socialists of all kinds need to be reminded that the vast majority of those who, when their friends and neighbours are in need of food, medicine, and clothes, supply these needs, vastly outnumber those who refrain from supplying them on the ground that what starving people really need most is tracts and addresses on ‘economic causes’ and on political reorganisation.

It is impossible to have two masters—the Pocket

and Conscience ; it is not possible to be dominated at the same time by self-interest and by unselfishness. This applies to rich men *but it applies no less to the poor*. It is true of individualists, but it is also and no less true of Socialists, whether they be Christian Socialists or Socialists of the atheist variety.

‘No man can serve two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.’<sup>1</sup>

The atheistic Socialist, knowing this fact, has definitely chosen, and his choice is Mammon, and consequently he is anti-theistic.

A young man, whose selfishness took the form of other-worldliness, once came and asked Jesus Christ how he was to inherit ‘Heaven.’ Christ asked a counter-question, namely : ‘What reply does the Jews’ religion give to your query ?’ The man, who wanted to save his own soul, replied : ‘Love God and love your comrade.’ Jesus Christ said : ‘Your theory is excellent : disinterestedness is Heaven. Practise it.’ The man (who was a religious teacher) asked : ‘What is meant by comrade—i.e. to whom is it that I owe love and service ?’ (The authorities on the subject were far from being agreed upon this point.) ‘Am I to limit the term neighbour or com-

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. vi. 24 ; and St. Luke xvi. 13.

rade to my relatives, or to my friends, or to my co-religionists? To whom do I owe love and service?' Jesus Christ's reply was to give the parable of the Good Samaritan (St. Luke x. 30-37) :—

' A certain man [a Jew] went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain [Jewish] priest that way : and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a [Jewish] Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan [i.e. enemy], as he journeyed, came where he was : and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [He did not offer him a tract, either on religion or on economics.] And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, " Take care of him ; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." '

Having told this story, Jesus Christ asked his interlocutor :—

' Which now of these three, thinkest thou, *acted the neighbour* [or " comrade " ] unto him that fell among thieves ? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, " Go, and do thou likewise." '

So long as men are suffering from want or disease, when you meet a sufferer, do not merely

stop to argue with him about conditions and causes, do not merely give him a tract on economics, do not merely explain to him how it comes about that he is in need, do not merely make a fierce attack upon those who, in your opinion, have brought about his condition, but *do something to help the sufferer*. I admit that it costs the individual philanthropist more to go and help the man who is down than it does the Socialist to merely grumble at the fact that he is down, and to make a verbal attack upon the supposed causes of his downfall. It is undoubtedly easier, and it is certainly far less expensive, merely to blame the robbers who have decamped. Quite obviously, however, to do so is not so useful to the sufferer, whose life-blood is meanwhile ebbing out, as it would be to act the Good Samaritan and help him.

Jesus Christ told a parable of judgment beyond the grave (see St. Matt. xxv. 31 *et seq.*), which culminates in the words: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it, or have done it not, to the least of these my brethren ye did it, or did it not, to me.'

'Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came

unto me." Then shall the righteous answer him, saying? "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?" And the King shall answer and say unto them, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." Then shall they also answer, saying, "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?" Then shall he answer them, saying, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me."'

On another occasion, He said :—

'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'<sup>1</sup>

And again :—

'All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.'<sup>2</sup>

'Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their

<sup>1</sup> St. John xv. 12.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. vii. 12 (R.V.).

great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you : but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister ; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant : even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' <sup>1</sup>

The atmosphere of the atheistic Socialist meeting is one of hatred, bitterness, hostility, vituperation, worldliness, greed, &c. A different atmosphere clings round the following prose poem :—

' Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God ; for God is love. Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man hath beheld God at any time : if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us : hereby know we that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit. And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. . . . God is love ; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. Herein is love made perfect with us that we may have boldness in the day of judgment ; because as He is, even so are we in this world. There is no fear in love : but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment ; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love God,

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xx. 25 ; St. Mark x. 42.



because He first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar : for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God loveth his brother also.' <sup>1</sup>

It is argued that the New Testament is the primary cause of class distinctions. Is this really so ? St. James writes :—

‘ My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing ; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place ; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool ; are ye not divided in your own mind, and become judges with evil thoughts ? Hearken, my beloved brethren ; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him ? But ye have dishonoured the poor man. . . . Howbeit, if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, “ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” ye do well : but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin.’ <sup>2</sup>

Once when attacked simultaneously by three different schools of atheistic Socialists in a London park, I said to them :—

‘ Well, at least, we all four of us agree upon

<sup>1</sup> 1 St. John iv. 7-21,

<sup>2</sup> St. James ii. 1, &c.

one point: we all strive to adopt the ideal of unselfishness.'

All three schools replied :—

'That is by no means our ideal, but the contrary: the masses, as a whole, must learn to cultivate class-selfishness. The unselfish individual is not at all likely to get on in life, and the same applies to any unselfish class of people.'

What does St. John say?

'We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth. Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth.'<sup>1</sup>

Is the teaching of the New Testament anti-social? St. Paul says that we are all of us integral parts of one and the same organic whole :—

'The body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the

<sup>1</sup> 1 St. John iii. 13-20.

body ; is it therefore not of the body ? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing ? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling ? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. If they were all one member, where were the body ? But now they are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee : nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.' <sup>1</sup>

The ideal of vehement invective is very apt to take the place of the truly social ideal of love, in the campaign carried on by Socialists of the atheist variety. Men are too apt to speak and to write against other people who are doing what they can for humanity, instead of doing something more direct to help their brother man, who is in urgent need of immediate help, rather than of political and economic advice.

St. Paul says, again :—

‘ If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge ; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind ; love envieth not ; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor., xii. 14-22.

not its own, is not easily provoked, taketh not account of evil ; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth : but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away ; whether there be tongues they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part : but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. . . . But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; and the greatest of these is love.'<sup>1</sup>

The above quotations give some idea of what Christian ideals really are. The passages show what Christians aim at. Our ideal is disinterestedness. The essence of Christlikeness is unselfishness. Ideals inspire conduct. The actual relief of necessity is not undertaken by atheistic Socialism, but by Christianity.

If it be said that very many Christians are a disgrace to their ideals, and that therefore those *ideals* ought to be attacked with calumny, and destroyed by slander, I reply : If the conduct of many (so-called) Christians is very often too secular, too materialistic, too deterministic, too atheistic, too un-Christian—if many Christians do not live up to their religious ideals—What then ? Are atheists, therefore, to consider that any weapon is justified if only it can injure

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiii.

Christian *ideals*? Is it reasonable to suppose that by throwing mud at Christ's standard of conduct atheists are going the right way to work to leave the world a little better than they find it? Can anti-Christian Socialism expect to improve human nature by trying to poison men's minds against Christlikeness; and by destroying their highest aspirations after unselfishness; and by teaching the mean dogma that nearly everyone is a rogue at heart and selfish to the backbone? Are we to imagine that by throwing mud at Christian *ideals* we shall cleanse and purify man's behaviour? Of course not.

'O brother man! fold to thy heart thy brother;  
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;  
To worship rightly is to love each other,  
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

Follow with reverend steps the great example,  
Of Him whose holy work was "doing good,"  
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,  
Each loving life a song of gratitude.'

At every first-class cricket or football match, the severest critics of our best players are invariably those spectators who have never once tried to play the game themselves. The same is true of all mere *spectators*. The reader must frequently have noticed the fact. We see the same thing in every

department of human activity. The man who never attempted to play football, and who never entered for a Marathon race, and who never tried to swim the Channel, is the severest critic of the very best of those who have tried their very hardest to do these things. Precisely the same thing is true in the sphere of conduct—in the case of unselfish behaviour, for instance. It is the complete outsider, it is the man who does not himself attempt to act unselfishly, it is the person who does not even aim at being unselfish—it is this man who appears to think that disinterestedness is so very easy that he is more than justified, utterly selfish though he be himself, in vehemently condemning those whose selflessness, great though it is, leaves something to be desired. It is the man who never attempts to resist the temptation to be selfish, but who, on the contrary, argues that selfishness is both inevitable and wise—it is that man who is the severest critic of those who have, for many years, made a heroic struggle to be disinterested, but who, after all, are, even now, only human, and who are, therefore, sometimes selfish. It is only those who have never tried to live a Christlike life themselves who do not perceive that the life of Jesus Christ was a stupendous miracle, and that lesser miracles of the same kind (i.e. of Christlikeness) are quite common in

every-day life. Those who feel no sympathy for the ideal, 'Play up and play the game,' are the severest critics of those whose object in life is to do that at whatever cost.

The Rationalist Press Association has brought out, as a cheap reprint (sixpence a volume), a work entitled 'Rationalism in Europe,' written by the great Rationalist historian, Lecky. The Rationalist Press Association prints upon the cover of his book the words: 'A Monumental Work.' It is always interesting to know what opponents have to say about us, and it is delightful when we find them honest in their attacks upon us. Therefore, I quote with pleasure one or two passages from Lecky. After an able attack upon the Christian Church, he writes :—

'But if, turning from ecclesiastical historians, we apply the exclusively moral tests which the New Testament so invariably and so emphatically enforces, if we ask whether Christianity has ceased to produce the living fruits of love and charity and zeal for truth, the conclusion we shall arrive at would be very different. If it be true Christianity to dive with a passionate charity into the darkest recesses of misery and vice, to irrigate every quarter of the earth with the fertilising stream of an almost boundless benevolence, and to include all the sections of humanity in the circle of an intense and efficacious sympathy; if it be true Christianity to destroy or weaken the barriers which had separated class from class and nation from nation,

to free war from its harshest elements, and to make a consciousness of essential equality and of a genuine fraternity dominate over all accidental differences ; if it be, above all, true Christianity to cultivate a love of truth for its own sake, a spirit of candour and of tolerance towards those with whom we differ—if these be the marks of a true and healthy Christianity, then, never since the days of the Apostles has it been so vigorous as at present.’<sup>1</sup>

After singing the praises of Rationalism, Lecky writes :—

‘ On the whole, however, it can hardly be doubted, that the general tendency of these (rationalising) influences is unfavourable to enthusiasm, and that both in actions and in speculations this tendency is painfully visible. With a far higher level of average excellence than in former times, our age exhibits a marked decline in the spirit of self-sacrifice, in the appreciation of the more poetical or religious aspect of our nature. The history of self-sacrifice during the last 1800 years has been mainly the history of the action of Christianity upon the world.’<sup>2</sup>

In his ‘ History of Morality from Augustus to Charlemagne,’ Lecky writes<sup>3</sup> :—

‘ It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love ; and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions,

<sup>1</sup> Rationalism in Europe, Vol. I., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. II., p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. II., p. 8.



and has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practice ; and has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said, that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists. This has been the well-spring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft, the persecution, and fanaticism, which have defaced the Church, it has preserved in the character and example of its Founder an enduring principle of regeneration.'

I quote what the conscience of an honourable opponent impels him to admit about the social effects of Christianity, because to do so is necessitated by the violent attacks which are made upon us by our Socialist enemies. I have refrained from enlarging upon this theme, because every true Christian realises that, although our ideal is perfect, our execution, as compared with our ideal, is exceedingly defective. The remedy is to realise our ideal, not—as so many Socialists maintain—to eliminate that ideal altogether.

Socialism argues that society is, at present, very far from being what it ought to be, and from what it may yet be. Let us freely grant this. But what then ? Surely the question is, How are we to improve the state of society ? One theory is that everything will be put right by legislation, by

Act of Parliament, or by revolution. Another view is that the workers in different trades should unite and compel employers or the community to do what they demand. The Christian solution is that what is primarily needed is the improvement of *individual character* by the increase of Christ-likeness. As character improves, political, social, and economic conditions will improve also.

And the Christian Church is the school in which the Christian character can best be developed. The Church which realises itself in this capacity is, and will ever be, successful, inasmuch as she will turn out 'Christians' as long as the world stands—that is to say, persons who have Christ in them, persons who will go about doing good as He did, persons who will have power as He had, persons who, together with Him, will bring about the great consummation for which the whole creation groans and travails until now—the establishment of the Kingdom whose law is the law of Love.





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